ELECTRONIC RESOURCES REVIEWS

BioWizard. BioWizard, University City Science Center, Suite 300, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104; info@biowizard.com; <http://www.biowizard.com>; free website.

Purpose

BioWizard is a web-based platform for communally submitting and evaluating professional biomedical literature and is intended to aid clinicians and researchers in the discovery of recent literature in their disciplines that other users have rated to be high quality, important, or interesting.

Background

The model of Digg <www.digg.com> has become quite well known and broadly adopted for a variety of purposes. Any person who chooses to register as a Digg user can submit items of information for communal consideration, and other members of the community can rate submitted items and comment on them. The site then aggregates communal opinion about each submitted item and orders them so that the items regarded most highly by the community of users as a whole are featured the most prominently. BioWizard applies this model to the communal evaluation of biomedical literature.

General description and major features

BioWizard allows the user to search PubMed using PubMed's own familiar interface but superimposes a button that allows any citation in PubMed to be submitted to BioWizard's users for rating and comments. If the citation has already been submitted to BioWizard, clicking this button will register the user as having "promoted" the citation (analogous to "digging" an item on Digg). Articles are submitted in eighteen specific categories (e.g., "Oncology," "Immunology," or "Renal/Urology") and are imported into BioWizard along with the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) (referred to as "tags" by BioWizard) with which they were indexed. Users can search articles rated in BioWizard and browse articles by category, ranking, or submission time.

Users need not frequently visit the site to keep up with new developments, as BioWizard provides a really simple syndication (RSS) feed and emails updates that deliver the latest submissions and rankings directly to the user. If you find that a specific user consistently identifies and submits excellent articles, you can mark that user as a "friend" or subscribe to an RSS feed of articles submitted by that user. BioWizard can be seen as a sort of massive, web-based, open journal club.

Intended audience

Although BioWizard describes itself as a tool for life scientists and physicians, it is equally useful to virtually any clinician or researcher in fields of biomedical endeavor, especially those for whom current awareness activities are important.

Brief comparison to other similar products

Several other sites have attempted to apply the "Digg model" to biomedical literature—including Admitt.com <www.admitt.com>, BioInfoBank Library <www.lib.bioinfo.pl>, CiteMD <www.citemd.com>, DoctorWorld <www.doctorworld.net>, JournalReview <www.journalreview.org>, MediNews <www.medinews.co.uk>, and Editor's News Choice on One Examination <www.my.onexamination.com/Community/NewsPopular.aspx>—but the most well known is probably Nature Publishing's Dissect Medicine <www.dissectmedicine.com>. While Dissect Medicine allows any uniform resource locator (URL) from any source (including popular literature) to be submitted as an item, BioWizard's tight integration of the familiar PubMed interface for searching and submitting not only makes submission easy, but ensures that any items being evaluated by the BioWizard community are only from the professional literature.

Timeliness

Articles are available to be submitted to BioWizard as soon as they are available in PubMed. A large and active user base finds and submits articles very shortly after they become available.

Limitations

- BioWizard's documentation leaves much to be desired. Information about the site and how to get the most out of it is sketchy and spread out.
- When BioWizard imports citations from PubMed, it calls them "tags." This gives the incorrect impression that "tags" are defined by users as some sort of folksonomy.
- BioWizard lacks customized RSS feeds or email. Its usefulness as a current awareness tool would be greatly enhanced if users could input their search terms of interest and community-rating threshold to create their own updates.
- Many specialties are not included in BioWizard's eighteen categories. Among BioWizard's limitations, this would seem the most obvious and most easy to fix.

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